



## **NEWS FROM NOAA**

**NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
May 12, 2008  
NR08.10

### **Researchers Awarded NOAA Grant to Develop Alternative Sampling Methods to Determine Scup Populations in Southern New England Waters**

NOAA Fisheries Service has awarded a \$97,500 grant to a team of commercial fishermen and a researcher to test alternative sampling methods to assess more accurately the status of the scup population in southern New England waters.

Results of this research, by commercial fishermen Charles Borden of Little Compton, R.I. and Eric Rodegast of Oak Bluffs, Mass., and Laura Skrobe of Rhode Island Sea Grant, could significantly improve research surveys of this species. The researchers will work from June through October in ten separate hard-bottom sites in southern New England that are currently not sampled by other finfish trawl surveys because of the rough topography.

Scup spend a majority of the summer in inshore hard bottom areas, and are fished by commercial and recreational fisherman. Also known as porgy, scup can grow to 18 inches in length and weigh three to four pounds, but more typically weigh about one pound and grow to eight to 12 inches in length.

Two additional sites, located on the scup spawning grounds in Vineyard Sound, will be sampled for a one-month period from mid-May through mid-June. The length-frequency distribution of the catch will be compared statistically to each of the other collection sites, to finfish trawl data collected by NOAA Fisheries Service, and to data collected during a similar project conducted during 2007 by the same researchers.

Catch allocations allowed under this grant include 64,000 pounds of scup, 2,000 pounds of summer flounder, and 24,000 pounds of black sea bass for a total allowable catch of 90,000 pounds.

For each fishing year, the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council may set aside up to three percent of the total allowable landings in certain mid-Atlantic fisheries to be used for research purposes under its Research Set-Aside (RSA) program, which provides a way to fund research and compensate vessel owners through the sale of fish harvested under the research quota.

The grant is one of three awarded under the program by NOAA Fisheries Service through its cooperative research program to further the understanding of the nation's fisheries, enhance information used in fisheries management decision-making, and foster collaborations among marine fisheries interests.

NOAA Fisheries Service is dedicated to protecting and preserving our nation's living marine resources and their habitat through scientific research, management and enforcement. NOAA's Fisheries Service provides effective stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to consumers and recreational opportunities. To learn more, please visit <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov>.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners, more than 70 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

Related links:

Cooperative Research Program: <http://www.nero.noaa.gov/StateFedOff/coopresearch/rsa.html>

Scup: <http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/sos/spsyn/og/scup/>

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